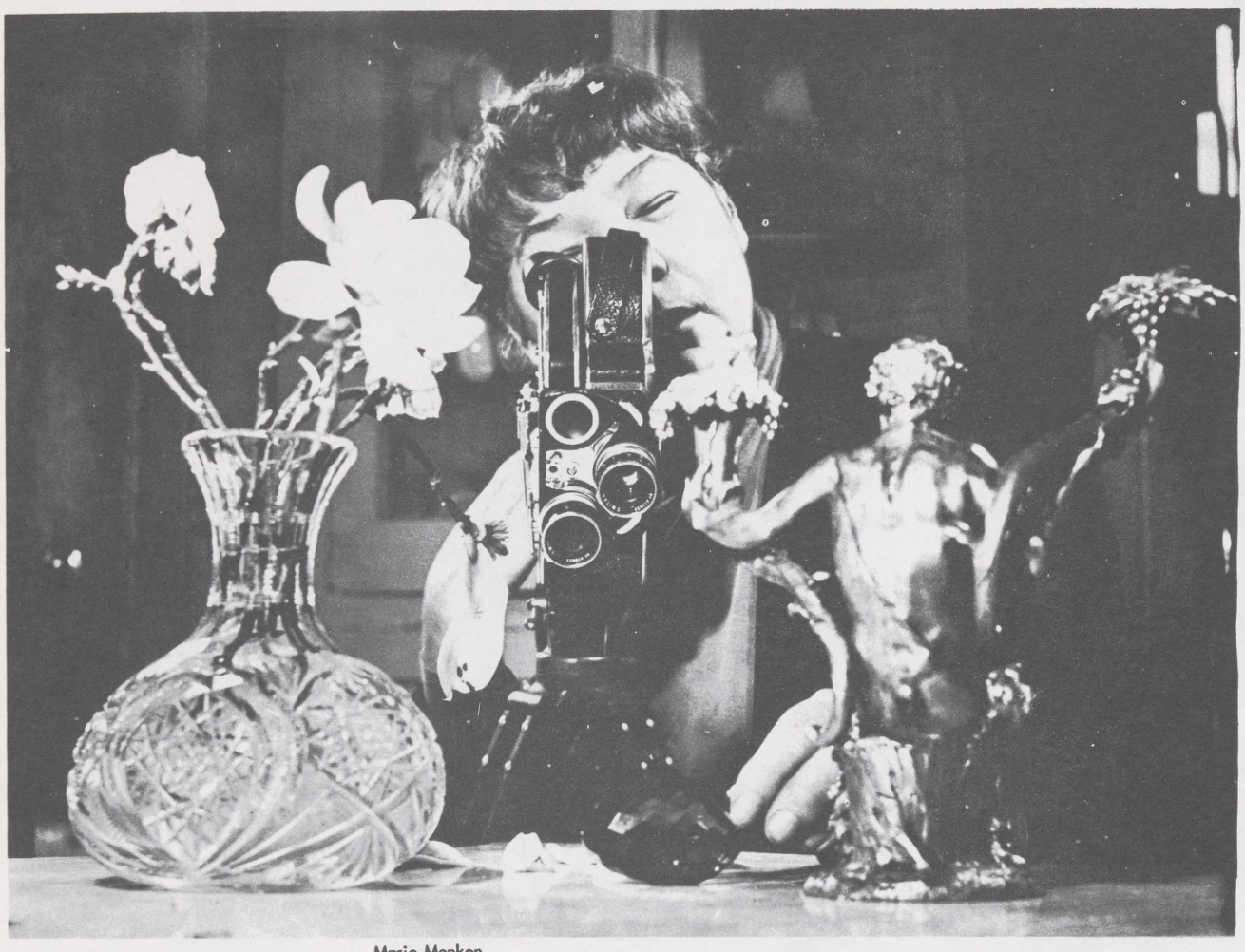
CANYON CINEMATHEQUE '75

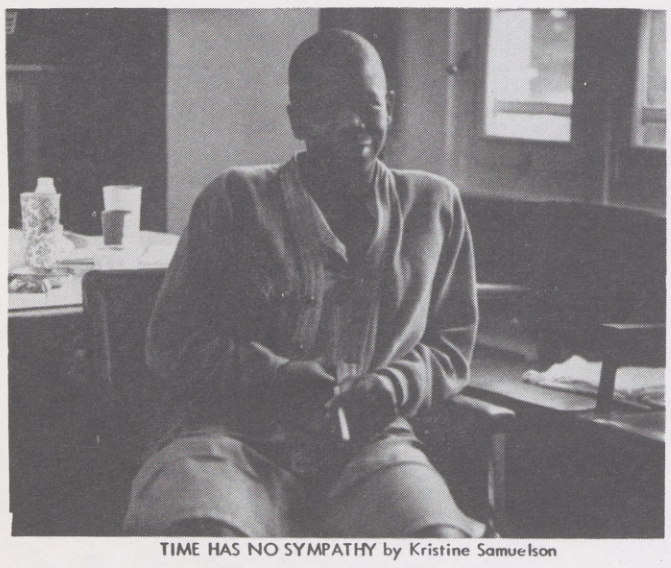
The only regular Bay Area showcase for personal and avant-garde films.
Shows on Thursdays 8:30 PM at the San Francisco Art Institute, 800 Chestnut St., San Francisco. Admission $1.75. Free coffee. For information call 332-1514.



Marie Menken



SKY PIRATE by Andrew Meyer



TIME HAS NO SYMPATHY by Kristine Samuelson



Dore O. in her film ALASKA

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NOVEMBER 6: ANDREW MEYER'S "SKY PIRATE"

WITH ANDREW MEYER IN PERSON

Andrew Meyer, who was among that seminal group of film-makers who showed their films at the N.Y. Film-makers' Cinematheque in the early 60's, and whose earlier films LITTLE MATCH GIRL, FLOWER CHILD, and AN EARLY CLUE TO A NEW DIRECTION have won awards all over the globe, will be here with his first feature-length film, SKY PIRATE.

"According to the evidence of SKY PIRATE, Mr. Meyer has picked up a good deal of ambition and scope since his earlier pre-feature days, without having changed significantly in terms of film-making talent and sensibility. Like many of his short films, the new effort is about peculiarly unhappy characters living out their fantasies as best they can, on the fringes of society. In this case, the round of frustrated hopes and shattered personalities leads a neurotic young man to attempt the hijacking of a plane; the movie depicts the dismal incidents and attitudes that lead up to the hijacking, and then -- in a strangely affecting single-take coda --relates the outcome of the crime without actually showing it."

-- David Sterritt, The Christian Science Monitor

"It's a grimy, gritty street-level tour of New York City....The sky pirate's Cuba, the New Left's revolutionary society, the wife's little-theatre Carmen, and the hooker from Spanish Harlem are all simply disguises of the same escapist Latin fantasy, film-maker Andrew Meyer subtly but memorably dramatizes. En route he demonstrates more creative feature film-making talent on a shoestring than many a director who would be insulted to operate with ten times the budget." -- Variety

"...the most sheerly beautiful underground feature since FLESH."
-- The Los Angeles Free Press

Starring Michael McClanathan, Claudia Leacock, Frank Meyer, Joy Bang, and others. 85 minutes. 1969.

NOVEMBER 13: A MORLEY MARKSON DOUBLE FEATURE

WITH MORLEY MARKSON IN PERSON

THE TRAGIC DIARY OF ZERO THE FOOL

In this film, Penelope, her lover, and her Fool find themselves trapped in a drama of reality and insanity. They are puppets played by the director, the film, the audience; yet at the same time, they insist on creating their own absurd drama. They begin by playing roles based on characters of the Tarot, but as the film unfolds, the actors emote their own characters as the line between acting and reality becomes blurred. Ultimately, differentiation becomes impossible, so that it is all real, and it is all an act.

"All week (at the 1970 Ann Arbor Film Festival) we waited for lightning to strike, and on Saturday night it finally did, in THE TRAGIC DIARY OF ZERO THE FOOL. I have since tried to convey the genius of this overwhelming film to a number of people but have failed, for in summary everything in it dissolves into insubstantiality....a brilliant acting performance by Gerald S. Cogan as the Fool (Gerald S. Cogan committed suicide shortly after the film was completed)...and a thoroughly engrossing performance of intelligent and sensitive minds in motion by two young persons...Daniel Grigg and Penelope...masterful films like this do not just happen."-New Cinema Review 75 minutes. 1969.

BREATHING TOGETHER

With Allen Ginsberg, R. Buckminster Fuller, Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, Fred Hampton, John Sinclair, William Kunstler, Don Cox, Claes Oldenberg, John Lennon, and Timothy Leary.

"A canny, candid Canadian mixture of compilation, shooting a re-enactment of the Chicago trials and a look at American militants and American outlooks in an electronic era that may also be influenced by Marshall McLuhan's attitudes towards the medium as a massage as well as a message. "It looks into the militant outlook and also gives the word to law enforcers, and architect Buckminster Fuller talks of a world where there is no poverty or hunger that is possible if man can only learn how to share his world's resources.

"It underlines the freedom of thought and speech and does not force its issues but does indicate it believes in a conspiracy against some American radicals." -- Variety 85 minutes. 1971.

NOVEMBER 20:
THE FILMS OF WERNER NEKES AND DORE O.

WITH WERNER NEKES AND DORE O. IN PERSON

Two of West Germany's best-known avant-garde film-makers, Werner Nekes and Dore O. since the mid-sixties have made more than thirty films, together and separately, films about cinematic structure and rhythm and the relationship between sound and image. They have won numerous prizes at European film festivals and have traveled and shown their films to audiences throughout Europe, the United States, and Japan. Nekes founded the Hamburg Film-makers' Co-operative in 1968 and has organized the "Hamburger Filmschau" (open festival) since 1968.

The exact program will be announced by the film-makers at the time of the showing.

NOVEMBER 27: no films (Happy Thanksgiving)

DECEMBER 4: THREE NEW DOCUMENTARIES PORTRAITS OF WOMEN

TIME HAS NO SYMPATHY by Kristine Samuelson

A humanistic portrait of women in prison made by a woman. Without special emphasis on political or expository material, TIME HAS NO SYMPATHY conveys strong emotion through a detailed coverage of daily prison life and the unfolding character of LaRue, a committed spokeswoman for social change. Serving time with considerable grace in San Bruno County Jail, these women are imprisoned for offenses which victimize them more than they have harmed society. 28 minutes. 1975.

FRIDA KAHLO by Karen & David Crommie

Kahlo is Mexico's most famous woman painter. A flamboyant, outrageous woman obsessed with the child she couldn't have and in love with a man who was to change the course of art history...Diego Rivera. Dying, she had herself wheeled in a protest march against the C.I.A. Andre Breton called her a bomb disguised as a butterfly. Filmed in Mexico and narrated by the eleven people who knew her best, the film traces a life which wavered on the cutting edge of art and politics during the 30's. 40 minutes. 1975.

NEVER GIVE UP by Ann Hershey

A documentary about photographer Imogen Cunningham. Now 93 years old and having worked over a century in photography, Cunningham has witty and insightful comments on some of the "greats" in photography. Her approach to life, old age, and death is sassy and inspirational. 28 minutes. 1975.

-- notes by Freude

DECEMBER 11 & 18:
THE FILMS OF MARIE MENKEN & WILLARD MAAS

Marie Menken and Willard Maas were the couple after whom Edward Albee patterned WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF? They fought and loved each other for over three decades and in the courses of their lives inspired such film-makers as Stan Brakhage, James Broughton, Kenneth Anger, and Maya Deren, all of whom have acknowledged a great debt to them. Marie Menken died on December 29, 1970, and four days later Willard Maas followed her. Jonas Mekas wrote their obit in the Village Voice:

"So there we are. Two beautiful human beings and two of the most important and most colorful figures of the American avant-garde film gone. Only their work will remain with us. The day Marie was buried, her show took place at the Anthology. We watched the films from a different perspective. Before, there were her films, and there was Marie Menken herself, the artist, exuberant, joyful, stormy, and unpredictable, and very, very kind; and there was Willard, as unpredictable as Marie, and spouting, and puffing, and always concerned, always fighting, always in trouble, and always very, very kind, at the end. So now we looked at the films, and the films were now all there was, and they were beautiful, and pure, and a world in itself, the essence of Marie Menken which now will be always with us, these films will be our Marie, and the films of Willard will be our Willard."

DECEMBER 11: THE FILMS OF MARIE MENKEN

"I shall begin the year by praising the poet....What is poetry? An exalted experience? An emotion that dances? A spearhead into the heart of man? We are invited to a communion, we break our wills, we dissolve ourselves into the flow of her images, we experience admittance into the sanctuary of Menken's soul. We sit in silence and we take part in her secret thoughts, admirations, ecstasies, and we become more beautiful ourselves. She puts a smile in our hearts. She saves us from our own ugliness. That's what poetry does, that's what Menken does.

"There are poets who are only beginning to sing. You see their clumsy sentences, vague or muddy imagery, unsure movements. Gropingly, searchingly, they move across the screen. Marie Menken's work is evenly finished and mature. There are very few unfinished or unsure lines in her language. The ten films shown at the Charles (Theater) represent the work of her life, and this work, these sixty minutes, place her together with the very best of our contemporary poetic cinema."

-- Jonas Mekas, Village Voice (1/4/62)

HURRY! HURRY! (3 min.)
GLIMPSE OF THE GARDEN (5 min.)
DWIGHTIANA (3 1/2 min.)
EYE MUSIC IN RED MAJOR (4 min.)
NOTEBOOK (10 min.)
MOOD MONDRIAN (7 min.)
ANDY WARHOL (22 min.)
MOONPLAY (5 min.)
DRIPS IN STRIPS (2 1/2 min.)
GO GO GO (12 min.)
LIGHTS (6 1/2 min.)
SIDEWALKS (6 1/2 min.)
EXCURSION (5 1/4 min.)
WATTS WITH EGGS (2 1/4 min.)

DECEMBER 18:
THE FILMS OF MARIE MENKEN AND WILLARD MAAS

Marie Menken:

VISUAL VARIATIONS ON NOGUCHI (4 min.)
ARABESQUE FOR KENNETH ANGER (4 min.)
BAGATELLE FOR WILLARD MAAS (5 min.)
WRESTLING (8 min.)

Willard Maas:

GEOGRAPHY OF THE BODY (7 3/4 min.)
THE MECHANICS OF LOVE (7 min.)
IMAGE IN THE SNOW (29 min.)
A VALENTINE FOR MARIE (4 min.)
(made with John H. Hawkins)
ANDY WARHOL'S SILVER FLOTATIONS (4 min.)
ORGIA (12 min.)
EXCITED TURKEYS (12 min.)

"After twelve years of silence, one of the most important pioneers of the avant-garde film presented to us two new works. Which doesn't happen every day. ORGIA and EXCITED TURKEYS, the two new works by Willard Maas, tower like two green trees above the contemporary ramblings....I consider the two new works of Maas among the important works of cinema. I am not sure where their real power comes from. You are never sure with any work of art. You only know that it's there and that it works. There is a powerful personality behind them. Both works are examples of film realism. But a realism that is like that of GREED is lifted to a level where it becomes poetry. This is done by means of stylization and a few well chosen details, like the presence of Maas himself in ORGIA. The realism of feeling. The realism of detail. And above all, the great sadness that pervades both works....In ORGIA, Maas wears a laughing clown mask. At one moment he takes it off, and then we see the face, and if there ever was a sad face, it is the face that comes from under this laughing mask in ORGIA....The realism (in EXCITED TURKEYS) is lifted to the poetic intensity where the meanings become deeper, universal, multi-level....That's the thing about art, that when a thing reaches the stage of being art it remains exactly what it looks like and at the same time is something else. It depends who looks at it and how one looks at it. Only that much is revealed to you as is in your own eye. And it pulls you into a deeper experience of the subject. We are enriched....Willard's works are like islands in that vastness, islands to stop on, to compose oneself, and from which to cast a sad eye upon the rest." Jonas Mekas, Village Voice

DECEMBER 25: no films (Merry Christmas)
JANUARY 1: no films (Happy New Year)